

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 01489 261516Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5218

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NODIS

PASS TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR SECRETARY OF THE
ARMY AND UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: NATO MPOL GW US

SUBJECT: TANK GUN

REFS: (A) STATE 20968 DTG 260141Z JAN 78;

(B) BONN 1301 DTG 231846Z JAN 78

1. ON JANUARY 26, EMBOFF DELIVERED THE LETTER IN REF
(A) TO DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT
(BLOCH). AT BLOCH'S REQUEST, EMBOFF WAS TAKEN DIRECTLY
TO STATE SECRETARY SCHNELL WITH THE LETTER. MR.
EBERHARD, DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY'S ARMAMENTS
DIVISION, WAS ALSO PRESENT IN SCHNELL'S OFFICE.

2. AFTER READING THE LETTER, SCHNELL SAID HE WOULD
DISCUSS ITS CONTENTS WITH MINISTER LEBER AND INFORM
THE EMBASSY LATER IN THE DAY WHETHER THE FRG WOULD BE
IN A POSITION TO SEND A DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON THIS
WEEK.

3. ABOUT 45 MINUTES LATER, SCHNELL PHONED THE EMBASSY
TO SAY THAT LEBER WAS UNABLE TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION

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IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE HE WAS BUSY PREPARING A SPEECH
WHICH HE WOULD DELIVER IN THE BUNDESTAG THIS AFTERNOON.
HOWEVER, SCHNELL SAID THAT HE AND EBERHARD HAD DECIDED
TO RECOMMEND TO MINISTER LEBER THAT EBERHARD AND THE
DIRECTOR OF RHEINMETALL (HERR HOCKEL) TRAVEL TO
WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 27 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH
THE US SIDE.

4. SCHNELL SAID THAT, SINCE MINISTER LEBER WILL BE IN THE BUNDESTAG ALL AFTERNOON, IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO PUT THIS RECOMMENDATION TO HIM UNTIL 1800 BONN TIME, OR LATER. SCHNELL PROMISED TO CALL THE EMBASSY AS SOON AS LEBER HAS REACHED A DECISION.

5. SCHNELL SAID THAT, IF EBERHARD AND HOCKEL GO TO WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 27, THEY WILL ARRIVE IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON WASHINGTON TIME. WE SHALL PROVIDE WASHINGTON WITH FLIGHT NUMBER AND OTHER DETAILS AS SOON AS THEY ARE KNOWN.

6. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GERMANS ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT, AND RESPONSIVE TO, BUNDESTAG ATTITUDES ON THE TANK GUN NEGOTIATIONS. SCHNELL TOLD US THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A PHONE CALL THIS MORNING FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BUNDESTAG DEFENSE COMMITTEE, CDU PARLIAMENTARIAN MANFRED WOERNER, WHO HAD WARNED: "BE SURE TO PROTECT GERMAN INTERESTS" IN THE TANK GUN NEGOTIATIONS. EBERHARD ADDED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED "SEVERAL CALLS" FROM BUNDESTAG MEMBERS, ALL OF WHOM HAD URGED CAUTION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE US SIDE. EBERHARD SAID SOME OF THE CALLERS HAD SUGGESTED THAT US ADOPTION OF THE GERMAN GUN WOULD NOT MEAN ANY REAL PROGRESS TOWARD GERMANY ON THE "TWO-WAY
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STREET" IF THE AMERICANS WERE ALLOWED TO WRING TOO MANY CONCESSIONS FROM THE GERMANS.

7. THE DEGREE OF BUNDESTAG ATTENTION TO THE TANK GUN NEGOTIATIONS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY INCREASED AS A RESULT OF THE DETAILED PRESS STATEMENT BY THE DEFENSE MINISTRY'S PRESS SPOKESMAN (FISCHER) ON THE DAY OF DR. LA BERGE'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON (REF B). WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT BUNDESTAG INTEREST IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL INCREASE STILL FURTHER IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. THIS WILL BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FROM NOW ON.
STOESSEL

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